

Weekly Situation Report
Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS)
DATE: May 27, 2003
From: Billy Causey

HOT TOPICS:

FKNMS Law Enforcement is hosting 10 rangers from Belize for a one week visit (through June 2nd). The visitors are conducted 'ride alongs' aboard the coastal patrol vessels (Mantas) during the busy holiday weekend, and several are participating in a patrol out to Dry Tortugas aboard the PT MONROE. The main focus of the ranger's visit is to observe sanctuary law enforcement.

The restoration and enhancement contract in Newfound Harbor SPA will be completed today, 27 May. A dedicated group of FKNMS staff, coordinated by Lower Region Damage Assessment Specialist Russell Reardon, was on site throughout the holiday weekend to provide supplies and oversee the work performed by Continental Shelf Associates, Inc. The group included Harold Hudson, Lauri MacLaughlin, Robert Kamphaus, Alicia Stevenson, and Cheva Heck.

The 82' PT LOBOS was disposed of through GSA on-line auction. The new owners have taken delivery of the vessel and transferred it to Tarpon Springs. Funds from the sale of the vessel must be used for similar property and will therefore go towards a yard package for the PT MONROE. The disposal of the LOBOS was coordinated by Lower Region Operations Manager Steve Baumgartner.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Memorandum of Agreement for law enforcement services has been signed and executed!

Dr. Brian Keller is attending a SEA-COOS workshop in this week. SEA-COOS is the Southeast Atlantic Coastal Ocean Observing System. The group, a consortium of academics and government representatives intends to develop a coastal oceanographic database from Florida up to Georgia.

R/V Odyssey (Bill Valley, Don Mooney, Dave Score) supported Dr. Robert Ginsburg and his research team from RSMAS for 5 days of coral reef assessment last week.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS/AWARDS:

The Large Ship Working Group met on Thursday, 22 May co-chaired by LR Manager Fritz Wettstein and SAC Member Don Kincaid. The meeting primarily focused on turbidity issues. EPA Program Specialist Bill Kruczynski participated as a panelist during the discussions. The meeting was well-attended and promoted some good discussions on the issues. In addition, the Navy and CZR gave a presentation on the proposed dredging project. Special thanks to SAC Coordinator Fiona Wilmot and LR Administrative Assistant Carolina Sullivan for taking care of the details of this meeting, and assisting with set-up and clean up.

Lower Region Damage Assessment Program Leader (ES III) Anne McCarthy is assisting FMRI in conducting fish and benthic surveys of the Middle Grounds (an area approximately 100 miles off the coast of Tampa) from May 19 - 30. The trip was interrupted by rough weather and a few boat problems, but the team was back underway over the Memorial Day weekend.

HEAD'S UP:

The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force South Florida Local Action Strategy Workshop is being held in Ft. Lauderdale this week. The group will discuss a regional coral reef protection initiative and coordinate efforts among existing projects. The meetings, initiated by State of Florida, include a SE Florida Interagency Meeting - afternoon of 5/27 - 5/28 - morning 5/29, and a Stakeholders Meeting - afternoon of the 29th. FKNMS personnel planning to attend include LR Manager Fritz Wettstein, Resource Specialist Lauri MacLaughlin, and Education Coordinator Mary Tagliareni. Mary Tagliareni serves as the Federal Navigator for the Lack of Awareness issue.

COMMUNITY EVENTS:

FKNMS, in conjunction with World Wildlife Fund, will host the annual 'Kids Trip' out in Tortugas 31 May - 1 June. Sanctuary vessels DANTE FASCELL and IRENE C will host 12 students, all from Marathon Middle School. These students have been active in the formation of Tortugas Ecological Reserve for several years. In addition, these two teams are the first and second place winners of the FKNMS/Monroe County Environthon.

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES:

None